Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God

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Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God

by Tharapita

Summary

Will Graham is not the Angel's name, but the Angel likes to pretend it is, and so feel closer to the human He is intrigued by. As a Seraphim, He is not supposed to even know about the existence of one Hannibal Lecter, let alone be obsessed with him. But Will just can't help himself.

He Falls from Heaven, right into Hannibal's lap. And that's only the beginning of his troubles.

"Why then belike we must sin, and so consequently die."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The human fascinates the Angel. The Angel spends hours of His eternal existence watching the human. The Angel likes to watch the human in every variation of the multiverse He can find him in. The Angel, Seraphim as He is, is not supposed to be fascinated by humans at all, and certainly not one single one. The Angel has more important things to do than to be swayed by the ways of one mortal existence, even when it is repeated ad infinitum. The Angel guides universes in their dance and stops timelines from collapsing, He should not be watching a human go to the supermarket to buy expensive cheese. Worse than that, the Angel has become fascinated with specific iteration of the human. When He found this iteration, He began watching him from the very beginning. Sequential order, birth then childhood then adolescence. He's not sure if anything other than a Principality has done that before. But the Angel can't help it.

In every other version of the human – or at least every other version He's seen, and truthfully, He's rather stopped looking for other versions having found this one – the human has an equal and opposite half, and they are caught in an eternal dance together and apart. But this version has not. He may already be playing fast and loose with God's rules, but He does not deign to BEGIN to understand why this version of the human is deprived of his other half, but He still does wonder on it. And, in the deepest recesses of His mind where no-one else can touch, He likes to pretend that He is this lonely human's other half instead.

The Angel is well aware that ALL of this is enough to have Him Cast Down. He's not even supposed to have a gender for goodness' sake; let alone put a part of His mind outside of God's touch. But He couldn't help but like the way the skin fitted, like it was designed for Him. Sometimes, the Angel goes further and takes a human name for Himself. The name of His human's other half. Whispers it to himself with a mouth He should not have and imagines that it is His name. That the human is the one whispering. Calling out for the Angel and the Angel alone.

And as if this couldn't get any worse. As if there was any way that this wasn't a sure-fire reason for the Angel to be Cast Down were He ever caught, the human He is so intrigued by is a sinner. A bound straight-for-Hell, near irredeemable sinner. Most of his incarnations are, in fact. Of course, the Angel hasn't seen the end of *His* human's story. The human He's been watching, every hour of his life sequentially; there is some small chance he could repent and never kill (and later eat) another person. But He's watched a lot of the other incarnations, and almost none of them are heaven-bound. And the Angel has a pretty good inkling His version is no different.

So it is perhaps unsurprising that it all comes to a head very quickly and painfully for almost everyone involved. The Angel is watching His human and not doing His job when the human's life takes a turn for the worst. He has seen this play out many times before – really for as much as He loves to watch the human draw he should be better at keeping the

incriminating ones hidden. Miriam Lass has spotted this one thousands of times across the multiverse, and often it leads to the human's incarceration. This time with His human it is no different. Except it is different, it must be different, because the Angel is watching. The Angel has seen the human in prison before, and it's never good for him. The Angel doesn't even know if this Miriam Lass will cause His human to go to prison, this might be one of the myriad times the human kills her without a second thought. But the Angel is so attached to *His* human he can't bare to think of it playing out any other way.

It barely takes a motion, not even a thought, and Miriam Lass' heart stops. She collapses to the floor almost instantly. The Angel watches her confused soul rattle out of her body too soon, and knows His human is safe.

The displeasure of God hits the Angel like a tidal wave moments later. It shakes His very being apart, his every atom messed up and around.
THAT WAS NOT MY PLAN They say, and Their anger is palpable. The Old Testament God of Righteous Fury pummels the Angel to pieces and the Angel does not even try to explain Himself. He knows He has gone against all He was made for. He has killed the delivered for a sinner. Meddled in the individual when He is Seraphim. On top of all else He has done that he was not supposed to. And yet He cannot bring Himself to care. Not when He knows His human is safe.
YOU ARE SO FAR FALLEN ALREADY YOU DO NOT EVEN TRY TO REPENT IN MY PRESENCE The Voice of God says, and the Angel acknowledges it without a second thought.

Falling is agony. Everything the Angel has ever known about himself is stripped away and He is contorted into a thousand torments. The Angel can't even begin to process what He experiences in that moment. He hears the Voice of God thundering one last time as He is ripped forcibly away from Their Grace.
CAST FROM MY SIGHT, YOU SHALL BE! AND CURSED BE THE NAME YOU BEAR, WILL GRAHAM

He has never felt such pain in His existence, and likely won't ever again. But the Fallen Angel can't honestly say he has any regrets.

After eventful days, Hannibal often likes to sit in his back garden with a glass of port and take in the night sky. It's a simple pleasure, but there is something so exquisite about the slow, inevitable dance of the stars, those incandescent perfect pinpricks of light, paired with the evening air that is just that bit fresher than the daylight's.

So it was terribly unsurprising that he was sitting on that particular evening, glass in one hand, out in wrought-iron a lawn chair, contemplating the stars. His day had been quite eventful indeed. Almost being caught by an FBI trainee – a trainee for goodness' sake! – only for her to then drop dead for no discernible reason. She had even crushed his illustration of the Wound Man on the way down, which was quite the inconvenience. Regardless, it was a warning he would heed, it was quite careless to keep something quite so obvious out in the open. Hannibal had debated about what to do with the body for quite a while.

On the one hand, it was completely true he hadn't laid a finger on her. She had died entirely of her own accord whilst in his office, and if he called the FBI – playing the poor, innocent, shocked doctor – he would hardly need to lie. On the other, Miriam had uncovered the unfortunate paper trail between him and Jeremy Olmstead – a man entirely deserving of his fate as the Wound Man – and should the FBI know he might fall under suspicion, regardless of how many distressed looks he gave out at the trainee mysteriously falling dead in his office.

In the end, it wasn't either of these considerations that had made up his mind. The prospect of making a display from Jack Crawford's own little minion is too much of a temptation. After all, he'd read enough to know the Chesapeake Ripper's kills come in sounders of three, so he might as well make this third – or perhaps ninth – tableau one to remember.

Luckily he'd only had one other client booked for that evening, stashing Trainee Lass' body in a cleaning cupboard for the duration, he had enjoyed ample time to decide what to do with her. He'd brought her home to his basement for a quick autopsy – it seemed a simple heart attack was the culprit, despite her otherwise excellent health; strange but not unusual, especially in a high-stress situation – and to acquire which of her organs he needed for his upcoming dinner party. And her heart. It wouldn't do to let the gentlemen chasing him know that he hadn't actually had a hand in killing her.

It was quite a nuisance to get all of the material Hannibal wanted for this particular tableau, but it wasn't just every day that an FBI agent – even just a trainee one – dropped almost literally into your lap, and he intended to make full use of her. First things first, he ran through nearly all the printer paper and ink in his office printing a small screenshot of a very specific area of a National Geographic map, and a copy of a book pirated from the internet.

Then, after waiting until the cover of darkness, he drove to a particularly seedy area of Baltimore and stole a road sign. He found his corpse fit quite wonderfully in the boot of his car – not the Bentley of course, that was far too conspicuous, but one he kept on hand for his more covert actions – which was ideal as he had quite location for his tableau of her. Just before he arrived there, however, he stopped off to make one last acquisition, breaking into a nearby church and stealing every copy of the Bible – quite delightful in the array of shapes and sizes – he could find.

It wasn't often the FBI abandoned their buildings in Quantico, but this was just one such building, towards the outskirts of their compound. Yes, it was incredibly risky setting up a display this close to the hornet's nest, but Hannibal couldn't help but delight in being this close to them. Especially as Trainee Lass had lived very near here. He was just returning her home, after all. Regardless, he worked quickly. There was no point in getting caught; that would spoil everything he was working towards here. He arranged her within the main entrance hall of the building, carefully positioning her to look like a copy of Lady Jane Grey from Delaroche's masterpiece. With a few, key differences of course.

First, the blindfold across her eyes was now woven from maps of the various alleys in the town of Quantico – the FBI were following blind alleys. And should his pursuers lift that

blindfold, they'd find her eyes were missing. Or rather, relocated to the back of her head, nestled in new eye sockets he'd crafted for her. Still covered by the blindfold, of course.

Next, her pristine white dress – a little changed from the originals, to leave her shoulders and arms bare – came out from her. Her torso was cut open in the archetypal autopsy 'Y' shape across her chest, skin then carefully peeled back to allow her dress to tumble forth from the space between skin and ribcage. Except this dress wasn't made of white silk, but pages of 'How to Become an FBI Agent' by William David Thomas as well as pages torn from the bibles – those displaying Galatians 6:7.

Finally, Miriam's thin white hand reached down hesitantly not just to her execution block, but to a standard US road sign that proudly proclaimed 'DEAD END' with stark black letters on a yellow background.

Quite an eventful day indeed, Hannibal reflected, swirling the port that remained in his glass. He took one last look of the unchanging night sky, before drinking the last few dregs and preparing to stand. Except, that wasn't quite right. Hannibal put down his glass on the wrought-iron table beside him, eyes suddenly caught by something different in the apparently not-so-unchanging night sky. A star that had definitely not been there before was winking excitedly at him. In fact, it was getting brighter the longer he looked at it. Disbelieving, Hannibal watched as the sparkle of light quickly grew into a huge inferno that changed the night about him into bright daylight, the white glowing epicentre growing so bright it became difficult to look at. Something getting brighter, or something approaching at a frightening pace? A meteorite perhaps? What else could it be?

Regardless of what it was, it was encroaching so quickly that there was no way Hannibal could outrun it. Instead, he stayed seated, and watched with morbid fascination as the whole world became brighter and brighter around him. Soon, the whole sky was a white-out, then everything but his own body burnt out into white, so bright it physically hurt his eyes to keep them open. Hannibal expected nothing but death, any moment now. Only, it wasn't hot. Light like this should have been accompanied by a burning heat, but the air around Hannibal – that he now couldn't even see – was as cool as any evening air should be. There was a sudden shock wave, the chair he was seated in was violently shaken; it felt like the ground was undulating beneath his feet and it took everything Hannibal had to stay in an upright position. The chair beneath him suddenly tipped backwards and Hannibal threw himself blindly in an effort to stay upright, the world still an absolute white void around him.

And then, as suddenly as the blinding light had appeared, it disappeared, plunging the world back into darkness. Hannibal, still shaken but somehow standing on the grass of his lawn – or at least that's what it feels like – took a moment to collect himself. *He was still alive.* His eyes, moments before being assaulted with a brightness that had surely done damage, took a long time to adjust back – the pitch black slowly mellowing back to the evening dimness it was before. All the while Hannibal was dreadfully aware that he has not died but was probably at the epicentre of something highly radioactive.

Eyes finally readjusted – or at least close enough – Hannibal surveyed his back garden. For the most part it was unchanged. His lawn furniture was upturned, port glass shattered amongst the grass blades, but beyond that everything is mostly as he left it. Oh,

except for the enormous crater that had transformed most of his garden into a huge, muddy maw. A huge crater that seemed to still be emanating light. That's why he can still see, Hannibal realised, there's a warm golden glow shining up from the bottom of the crater. Radioactivity was certainly looking more likely. Were there any nearby reactors to explode?

Nothing left to lose, Hannibal swiped his hair from his face and crept towards the edge of the crater, wary of unstable ground that might send him pitching into the hole himself. It was not as deep as its width suggested, and there, in the shallow centre of it, is the thing that's glowing. The thing that fell from the sky? It was…humanoid? No. That couldn't be right. Hannibal actually blinked and rubbed his eyes. Yes, the thing at the bottom of the crater was in the shape of a slender human; four limbs, head, torso; only it was made from pure golden light, casting its glow about it. The thing shifted, moved and raised its head a little before flopping back to its curled position, and Hannibal watched, transfixed. He wanted to move forward, bathe in the wonderful light it was giving out, but felt unable to. It was, all at once, too perfect for words.

Except, it was changing. Gradually at first, but more and more quickly, the golden light the figure was giving out was retracting inwards. The figure was getting dimmer. Dimmer and fainter and murkier, until all at once it collapses in on itself, and the figure was no longer made of light but the antithesis of it. Hannibal scrabbled against the changing light levels to still see, to see this thing now not giving out light but taking it in, darkness blacker than any other. The figure, a three-dimensional silhouette like a videogame glitch, shifted again. It rolled unsteadily onto all fours, facing away from Hannibal, before its body roiled, the edges of the nothing-blackness churned and heaved, before retracting suddenly back into itself.

The silhouette did not go away, however, the darkness left in its wake what looks suspiciously like skin. Human skin on the human figure. The darkness coalesced on its back before exploding back and outwards from the very-much-a-naked-human, forming itself into six feathered wings formed from this black-hole like darkness. It's only because Hannibal was so familiar with outlines that he could recognise them at all. The human (?) lifted itself suddenly, staggered, fell back onto its knees and for the first time Hannibal sees it in profile.

A man; younger; porcelain skin - except for his hands which were clawed and look like they'd been dipped in printer ink and legs which shifted at the mid-thigh to a burst of near-iridescent black feathers and then faded into two, slender deer legs that bent backwards gracefully; those indescribable three pairs of wings hung behind him; and a pair of deer antlers made of the same darkness erupted from his mess of curly black hair; a mouth full of fangs hung open, red flame eating its way out and licking around his face; eyes, open and staring burned with the same literal fire that dances up and out his face. Hannibal was captivated, mesmerised. Still unsteady, the being swung his head around like a drunkard and those searing eyes fell upon him. Hannibal could not move as emotions for the first-time blossomed on the creature's face, and one fateful thing fell from his lips alongside the hellfire.

"Hannibal." He whispered. "My Hannibal."

Chapter End Notes

God: You're obsessed with Hannibal Lecter
Will: I'm intrigued by him
God: Obsessively. *strikes Will down*

In all seriousness, please let me know what you thought of this. Even if you hated it. I have some vague ideas for turning this into a two-shot or maybe even a multi-chapter work, and I might do it if enough people like this!

The title comes from 'Doctor Faustus' by Christopher Marlowe, because Hannibal would approve of such a pretentious choice.

"That holy shape becomes a devil best"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal stared in disbelief at the meteorite creature at the bottom of the crater. The creature looked back with a literally burning gaze. He seemed as transfixed as Hannibal felt, shock and wonder plastered on the strange being's face. Slowly, almost unthinkingly, he reached out one hand outwards in a sad, abortive movement that has no hope of reaching Hannibal. It reminded the man of ~~Mischa~~ a toddler reaching out towards him, especially as the creature – clearly not used to its new shape – reached too far and overbalanced. Within that instant, Hannibal's trance was broken and he launched himself forwards into the crater. Half-falling half-scrambling down the upturned earth, he made it to the being and grasped him by the shoulders as he flailed miserably in the earth. Hannibal pulled him upright, carefully avoiding the sharp-looking branch of antlers that crowned the being's head. He wasn't rough but he didn't coddle either, brain still scrabbling after him trying to explain his impulsive actions.
"I find myself at a disadvantage." Hannibal found himself saying, his person suit acting even as his brain struggled, still caught in the creature's gaze. "You know my name and yet I have no knowledge of yours."
"Will." The creature said without hesitation. "Will Graham." He paused suddenly, a dark tongue finding its way through the fire belching from *Will's* mouth to run along his lips, before he looked so deep into Hannibal's gaze it was a wonder Hannibal wasn't lost inside forever. "Hannibal." He said again, searing eyes full of fear and wonder and confusion and joy. "I can't hear. It's just me, I can't hear."
"What do you mean?" Hannibal's hands twitched in their place, doctor's muscle memory coming to the fore of his person suit. Only, it's a little difficult to check for concussion when the patient's eyes are deep sockets of flame.
"It's just me in my head." The creature replied, fear beginning to beat out the other emotions on his face. "It's just my thoughts. I can't hear yours; I can't hear anyone's! I can't hear – " A desperate, wrangling sob broke through the creature's mouth, his face collapsing into misery " – I can't hear God. They're gone and I'm alone in my head!" There were no rules of decorum or politeness to help Hannibal answer that. He hesitated, faltered, and then suddenly his person suit shattered, leaving him shocked, naked, and alone. All he could find within him to do was stare, and the being stared back.

It felt like forever, the pair just looking at each other. Hannibal wasn't sure how long it lasted, but the moment was broken when he heard someone whisper,
"What are you?" And then realised it was he that whispered it.
"A Fallen Angel. At least, I think." Will replied. Hannibal did not believe in angels, demons, or really even God, but nevertheless replied,
"Then. What I saw – " Hesitating, he glanced upwards at the now perfectly normal night sky.
"Yes. I Fell. I was Cast Down." Will looked up as well, for a moment, his head tilting away from Hannibal's. "And now I'm alone."
"That seems rude, Mr Graham. I am right here." Hannibal wasn't expecting Will's gaze to snap so quickly back to his.
"Of course." The Fallen Angel whispered. "I Fell for you. So yours I shall be." At long last

Hannibal's person suit – or at least some semblance of it, more of a cracked mask really – slid back into place, just in time to catch a thought. *Having a Fallen Angel on my side shall certainly keep the FBI away.*

Hannibal managed to cajole Will into his house in the end with much trouble. He was clearly not used to walking, let alone on his thin, delicate deer legs which were so – for want of a better word – dainty that Will kept overbalancing and leaning on Hannibal for support. In the end, he had given up and simply flapped the bottommost of his wings so he hovered a few inches off the ground, his trim hooves lightly dusting the little grass that remained. They had settled in Hannibal's living room, sitting opposite each other in a way Hannibal couldn't help but find ironically similar to his therapy sessions. *Therapist to a Fallen Angel* would be an excellent tagline, if he was at all interested in one. He had made tea – a delicate lavender tea he'd added plenty of honey and sugar to, just in case the angel developed any human symptoms of shock. Will didn't seem entirely sure what to do with the mug, however, and had simply curled his clawed hand around the porcelain with a low hum.

They now sat in silence. Will, awkwardly curled into an armchair not meant for his dimensions, antlers almost catching on its high back, staring into the middle distance. Hannibal, studying every inch of him that he could see. He noted with indifferent interest that although the angel was entirely naked, he did not appear to have any genitalia, but was instead entirely smooth like a doll. Hannibal still did not believe in a divinity. Or, at least he did not want to. The very idea of a grand plan, creator deity, and host of angelic and demonic beings seemed patently ridiculous and entirely uncomfortable to him. The world was full of the polite and the impolite, men and monsters, predators and prey. Him and everyone else. To introduce a third category, let alone a fourth or fifth, felt indescribably wrong. But there was no way Hannibal could deny what was quite literally sitting in front of him, holding a rapidly cooling mug of tea. Whatever Will was, he did not fit into Hannibal's clear designation of beings within the world. Did that mean there was a god? Did that mean there was a God, with all of the Judeo-Christian trappings that came with it? Did he really care either way? It wasn't like the knowledge of an existence of God, Heaven, or Hell was truly going to stop him. Nothing stopped Hannibal Lecter except himself.

"Will." Hannibal addressed the angel, breaking his reverie. "You find yourself a free element. What do you intend to do with yourself?" The angel looked across at Hannibal with huge doe eyes, still projecting confusion and fear, although their fires no longer spilt from the confines of his sclera but instead curled brightly around his pupils like a fire in a grate.
"I don't know." His voice danced lightly somewhere between a whisper and softly spoken. "I'm alone in my head, no-one will give me orders there." Hannibal suddenly noticed that although Will was looking at him like a dog to its master, he wasn't actually making eye contact, his gaze instead landing somewhere between his chin and his collarbone. "Will you tell me what to do? I'll follow your orders to the letter I promise." Perhaps Doctor Lecter should have seen that one coming, with the angel's simpering adoration of him. Were he in a professional setting as a therapist currently, he would not be so obvious as to accept the offer of abject obedience. And regardless, to control and manipulate this being he did not need to have the angel aware he was controlling him. Therefore, a more subtle answer to this was required.

“Why do you feel the need to follow orders at all? Are your own desires not enough to follow?”
“I am an angel. I am Seraphim.” Will answered as if it were the most obvious thing in the world. “God’s will works directly through me. I – ”

He paused, blinked, shuffled his hooves a little. “I see your point. I was Cast Down for actions God did not sanctify, why should I not take all my own actions…only. That was the first – uhm – independent thing I have ever done, and it wasn’t really in service of myself. It was in service of you, Hannibal.” Will shuffled again, attempted to cross his legs, failed, and went back to his original position. *That is certainly a revelation I was not expecting,* Hannibal reflected.
“Could you elaborate on that? If you are comfortable doing so, of course.”
“R-right.”

Will put the tea mug down on Hannibal’s coffee table. Without a coaster. Hannibal could feel his eye twitching put he would put up with it for now. “Sorry I’m not used to talking to beings who aren’t omnipresent. I’m not used to talking at all, I’ve never had a mouth before.” He reached, absentmindedly, and gently touched one of his plush, full lips, before suddenly drawing his hand back as a flame fell from his mouth and licked the finger. “OW! It’s hot! Are mouths usually hot?”
“No.” Hannibal couldn’t help but feel mildly amused at this development. “Yours is just full of fire.”
“Oh.” Will stuck his tongue out and exaggeratedly opened and closed his mouth, with corresponding spurts of fire coming from it.
“You were saying about your…Fall.” Doctor Lecter pushed Will after another moment or two of silence. He really was rather curious about it, and about what Heaven was like.
“Oh. Right.” Will shifted uncomfortably, averting his eyes completely from the good doctor. “I’ve watched you. For a long time. I’ve watched you across the multiverse and I – you’re wonderful.” Hannibal stiffened in discomfort, he was sure minutely, but Will still looked at him askance anyway with those eyes of his. “I have seen billions – trillions – of humans live out their lives. An infinite number. My job was to guide whole universes at a time, I have seen the universe live and die and reborn in its entirety countless times. I’ve seen every sin under the sun – I had to so I could guide the cosmic dance away from them. But in all of that I only saw beauty because of you.”

Will suddenly stopped himself, panic overtaking him for a second. “Don’t misunderstand. Everything was beautiful. Heaven is literally indescribable and so *beautiful.* And your tableaus are sinful and wrong and – they speak to me. Heaven is beautiful because God decreed it to be so and everyone in Heaven sees with Their eyes; so it is seen as beautiful. Your murders are despised in the eyes of God, but I saw them as beautiful. *I* saw you as beautiful.”
“And it is your admiration of something so classed as sinful that caused your Fall?”
“Yes.” Hesitation again, the white-hot core to Will’s eyes flicked uncomfortably around the room. “Sort of. I was watching you and I saw Miriam Lass.” Oh. That was not what he had expected, but it made a disgusting amount of sense, the heart attack in a healthy heart fitting into Will’s story like a jigsaw piece. “I couldn’t bear to watch you in prison. I’ve watched versions of you from every end of the multiverse but seeing *you* in prison. It wouldn’t be *fair*.”

“You killed Miriam Lass.”
“Yes. But I’m not supposed to have enough individuality to make decisions of my own, let alone take actions of my own. That’s – that’s why I was cast down.” Will was burning holes with his eyes into the palms of his hands now, held open as if begging, their ink-black claws catching the electric lamp’s glimmer. The doctor thought for a moment, turning over the information Will had given him.

“You are of course more familiar with how exactly sinfulness and piety is defined.” Doctor Lecter began, keeping a careful eye on the Fallen Angel. Here was where his manipulation would begin and if he was too heavy handed, he could end up with the being incensed against him. Not an outcome Hannibal wanted to encounter. “But it would seem to me that your act was one of compassion towards myself. That is a virtue, not a sin.” He paused, to allow his words to really sink in for Will. Let his marionette’s strings begin to sink into the angel who, blissfully unaware of the dawning game, shifted uncomfortably and continued to stare at his hands. “I have always found it confusing why Adam and Eve were Cast Out from The Garden of Eden. Their sin was compassion, was trust – Eve to the snake and Adam to Eve. Why would God have created the apple tree and left it in The Garden if he did not wish for it to be eaten from? You seem to find yourself in a similar position, Will.”
“We shouldn’t be thinking of such things. It’s a sin to question God’s plan.” Will muttered, no conviction behind his voice.
“What is the matter when you are already damned?” The psychiatrist intoned carefully, his eyes on Will.

The angel stopped, dead still for a moment, before his eyes suddenly darted upwards to Hannibal’s, fire and excitement bursting outwards and dancing merrily on the edges of his face.
“But I’m not damned.” He said. His face split open into a wide smile of deadly looking teeth, laughter and fire falling in equal measures from him lips. *What.* Hannibal was unsure if Will had decided that going insane was actually the correct course of action after all. *That was not the reaction I was expecting or aiming for*. Deciding not to say anything, Doctor Lecter merely raised an eyebrow, and raked his gaze once, up and down, over Will’s chimera like-form. It didn’t deter the excited angel, however, who nearly rose to his feet, before looking down at his pin-point hooves. Hesitated. Remained seated. “I’m not damned.” He repeated, still overflowing with excitement. “Don’t you see – I’m not in Hell!” He threw his arms out in an expansive gesture to the room. “I’m not in Heaven, sure, but – ” He paused for a moment, gathering his thoughts. “You’re right. What I did, it wasn’t a Godly action, but it wasn’t Infernal either. It wasn’t *selfish*. It was just individual. Just……” Will’s eyes remained resolutely on Hannibal’s and…was that a *blush* on his bone-china cheeks? Hannibal swallowed again, resolutely. “Just human.”

“Is that possible?” Hannibal asked, manipulation forgotten for a moment as shock and curiosity overtook him. “For one to be Fallen but not Damned.”
“I don’t know.” Will said after a moment. “It’s not exactly – ” He paused, brow furrowing, before snorting suddenly, fire spurting from his nostrils. “Not exactly something angels gossip about around the water cooler……..But why else would I be here on Earth? Demons, devils, they belong in Hell. They live in Hell. If I’m not in Hell then, perhaps, I’m not a devil.” Will suddenly made a start to move again, this time engaging his wings and

ending up flying towards Hannibal. He landed, quickly, in an exuberant – if ungainly – hug all limbs and angles. Entirely uncomfortable, Hannibal sat resolutely as the angel squeezed him through an overwhelming surge of ~~love~~ emotion.

As sweet as it was, however, this was *not* the direction Doctor Lecter wanted this to go in. He wanted Will to embrace individuality, yes, but only individuality as opposed to God. An individuality that placed Hannibal Lecter front and centre, and no-one else.
"Tell me, Will." He said carefully into Will's ear, his voice quiet but firm. "Are you familiar with 'Doctor Faustus' by Christopher Marlowe?" The angel finally let go of him, drawing back to hover in the middle of the living room, confusion and worry on his face.
"What? I – well yes – but what does that have to do with anything?"
"In the play," the psychiatrist continued, almost ignoring Will's reply "Faustus asks Mephistopheles – the devil – if he is damned to Hell how he can walk on Earth. The devil replies 'Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God//And tasted the eternal joys of Heaven,//Am not tormented with ten thousand hells//In being deprived of everlasting bliss?'"

His point made, the good doctor stopped, face schooled into sympathetic pity. Sympathetic pity carved from marble. Will's face, however, was much more flexible – it collapsed inwards in grief, eyelids pulled shut as if suddenly weighted with insurmountable pain; his wings stuttered to a stop, sending him plummeting to land messily on the floor; there was a soft *hiss, hiss, hiss* noise of something sizzling. With a jolt, Hannibal realised it was white-hot lava falling from the angel's eyes as tears and searing against the cold hard wood floor.
"He's right." Will muttered, eyes prying themselves open slowly. "Heaven is the most beautiful thing imaginable. And God. *Fuck.* I wish I wasn't away from Them. They *do* love. To feel God's love work through you is the *most wonderful thing*." Will paused, a faint smile ghosting his lips, and raised his face towards the ceiling, desperately chasing the memory of those dappled sunbeams of love. He froze. Realising what he was doing, face sobering, he lowered his head again to stare at his cloven hooves. "Maybe I am in Hell, if not literally a place with the Devil and fiery pits all over the place."
"I'm sorry," Doctor Lecter's voice was dripping compassion. He rose, slowly, carefully, like he was approaching a wounded animal, before lowering himself to sit beside Will, carefully putting himself out of antler-clobbering range. "I should not have let you think of something so profound so soon after a traumatic experience." He placed a hand, gently, onto Will's lower back, letting the deep warmth of the angel's skin sink into his own.
"No, it's ok. It's my fault." Will said, leaning minutely into the doctor's touch and soaking up the guilt enough to obscure who should *actually* be guilty.
"Do you need to sleep?" Hannibal said suddenly, as if changing the subject onto something less emotionally painful. "Perhaps now would be a good opportunity to try. Resting, recuperating, and giving your mind a chance to recalibrate itself can be a very helpful and healthy thing to do."
"I – ok." Will said after a moment, finally looking up at Hannibal again.

Hannibal rose quickly, taking just a few moments to straighten the creases from his trousers and suit jacket, before reaching a hand down. Will looked at it, still unsure, before a look of steely determination descended. He reached up, grasping the outstretched hand, his skin still startlingly warm to the touch. With a grunt and a small boost, Will was standing. Swaying unsteadily, using his wings as ballast. But still standing under his own powers. He smiled a hesitant smile, that pinkish blush returning to dust his cheeks again. Ginger but determined,

he lifted one leg, balancing on one hoof, then placed it to the floor again. He had taken a step. He had actually taken a step on these thin deer legs of his. Will turned back to Hannibal, one hand still grasping his, and smiled.

Chapter End Notes

Wooooooo!!

One-shot no more!! I actually have a plan for this fic, structured chapters, the whole shebang!! And it's not a massive undertaking so (hopefully) we'll have semi-regular updates!! Please let me know what you think, I'm fascinated to hear. Plus any ideas you might have as to where I'm taking this next!

All chapter titles are also quotes from 'Doctor Faustus', and is chosen for thematic reasons :D

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!